

Party Footprints in Africa: Measuring Local Party Presence Across the Continent

Abstract

The conventional view of Africa's political parties holds that they are organizationally weak, with little presence at the grass roots. Yet, few studies are based on systematically collected data about more than a handful of parties or countries at any given point. In this paper, we attempt to remedy this situation, by focusing on one crucial aspect of party organization – the local presence that enables political parties to engage with and mobilize voters during and between elections – and developing the first systematic, survey-based measure of the extent of this presence across 35 countries. We draw on a wide variety of data to demonstrate the validity and reliability of this new index, and in the process showcase its ability to be calculated at a number of different levels. Finally, we illustrate its utility by applying it to a key substantive question in the literature.

Introduction

Political parties are a vital element in the quality of representative democracy. By providing a vehicle for disperse, but like-minded voters to voice their concerns, well-organized political parties help to overcome collective action problems, and encourage political participation (Gunther & Diamond, 2003; Key, 1964). Effective and responsive parties also enhance both vertical and horizontal accountability (Auerbach, 2016; Wegner 2016), while the presence of multiple independent parties provides individual voters with meaningful choice over who governs them, and creates a degree of electoral competition (Randall & Svåsand, 2002a).

While organizationally strong, competitive, and effective parties are widely acknowledged to play an important role in democratic governance, parties in Africa are typically seen as anything but (Erdmann, 2004). Indeed, the conventional view is that Africa's political parties are organizationally weak, with little grass roots presence, and thus limited capacity to engage citizens, represent their views, or mobilize voters (Erdmann, 2004; Rakner & Van de Walle, 2009; Randall & Svåsand, 2002b; Storm, 2013; Van De Walle & Butler, 1999). Despite the prevalence of these claims, the reality is that we actually know relatively little about the organization of political parties at the local level in Africa, in large part because we lack the sort of systematic, cross-national data that would allow us to evaluate this in any sort of rigorous way. Too often, the cost and difficulty of obtaining data on the ground means that research is based on single-case, or small-N country studies, often with a strong urban bias. Where cross-national data does exist, moreover, it is typically based

on the views of a small number of experts, located in urban centers, with limited evidence that their views accurately reflect the situation on the ground. The consequence is that we can make only limited generalizations about the quality of African parties, their organizational strength, and their effects on the quality of democracy, significantly limiting our understanding of the role that they play (e.g. Riedl 2014; Elischer 2013; Arriola 2013; LeBas 2011; Osei 2013; Kalua 2011).

Better data is therefore needed, and in this paper we begin this process, by focusing on one crucial aspect of party organization – the local presence that enables parties to engage with and mobilize citizens – and developing a new, survey-based measure that allows us, for the first time, to compare this aspect of party organization across the continent in a systematic and rigorous way. The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. First, we briefly discuss the literature on party organization in Africa, and the relationship between organization and local-level presence. Following this, we introduce the components of our new measure – the Party Presence Index (PPI) – before moving on to demonstrate that it not only provides a valid and reliable measure of party presence, but also improves on existing measures in a number of important ways. Finally, we conclude by including our new index in a study of public attitudes towards democracy, and showing that it helps to illuminate important questions in the literature.

Party Organization in Africa

Scholars of African politics often make a number of claims about the continent's political parties, almost all of them negative. With some few exceptions (see below), the common starting point is the assumption that Africa's parties are starved of resources, organizationally weak, and temporally ephemeral (Erdmann, 2004; Rakner & Van de Walle, 2009; Van De Walle & Butler, 1999). Lacking any sort of real presence at the grass roots, political parties are said to depend on discontinuous local structures, which are (re)activated for election campaigns solely in order to win votes, and/or on local brokers who mobilize support without necessarily having any allegiance to the party (Erdmann, 2004; Koter, 2016; LeBas, 2011; Rakner, 2011; Uddhammar et al., 2011).

It should be noted, of course, that the level and extent of party organization is seen slightly differently by a small set of scholars who focus on the long enduring dominant liberation movements of Southern and East Africa (e.g. TANU/CCM in Tanzania, SWAPO in Namibia, Frelimo in Mozambique, ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, and the ANC in South Africa). In these cases, political parties have been built on the back of predecessor

revolutionary structures, and are often seen as characterized by relatively high levels of administrative development, local presence, and organizational discipline (e.g. Southall, 2016; Butler 2015; Giliomee & Simkins 1999, Pitcher, 2012). Even for these scholars, however, the underlying assumption is typically that well-developed parties are the exception, not the norm, with local-level party organization and presence generally limited to the dominant liberation movement within a country, and opposition parties seen as more fragmented and weak (Pitcher, 2012).

There are at least two problems with this characterization of Africa's political parties. First, while scholars describe African parties as fragmented and organizationally weak, they often simultaneously assert their ability to distribute patronage effectively (Randall & Svåsand, 2002b). One is left wondering whether the latter is possible, if the former is true. Second, most of these accounts rely solely on illustrative evidence, or provide detailed empirical and comparative data, but only for a small number of parties in a small number of countries (Basedau & Stroh 2008; Riedl 2014; Elischer 2013; Arriola 2013; LeBas 2011; Mac Giollabhui 2011; Kalua, 2011 Southall 2016; Gilliomee and Simkins 1999; Wahman 2014). This seriously limits our ability to understand party organizational strength and presence on the continent, or to test its effects on the quality of democracy in any sort of rigorous way.

From Organization to Presence

In order to understand better the state of Africa's political parties, as well as their capacity to support or retard democratic governance, we propose a new measure of local party organization – the Party Presence Index (PPI). Presence is only one aspect of party organization, of course, but it is a critical one, central to the capacity of parties to carry out many of their primary functions. Being able to measure party presence accurately, therefore, enables us to gain important insights into the organizational structure of political parties on the continent.

To understand the centrality of presence to party activity, consider the following. Perhaps the most basic function of political parties in a multi-party system is to provide electoral contestation (Dahl 1971). Parties do this by recruiting candidates to stand for election under their label, and providing them with at least some common rationale for winning office (often expressed in a party manifesto), as well as coordinating the stances and actions of winning candidates once in office. These are all things that can, in principal, be

provided by a relatively small party organization located in the national capital and large urban centres.

But political parties also play at least two other crucial functions in a democracy, by aggregating and articulating voter interests (Easton 1965), and generating citizen participation (Dahl 1971). They do this by divining and representing voter preferences, advertising party and candidate attributes and positions, helping voters get to the polls, and – between elections – providing a place and person to which voters may take their questions, problems or policy concerns. This requires direct engagement between parties and citizens, and thus, at least some presence at the local level.

Political parties can achieve this grass-roots presence in several different ways. The ideal (and possibly idealized) method would be through formally employed local party officials, who establish and maintain an office in their community or district, recruit and organize volunteers who become involved in periodic election campaigns, and arrange campaign events such as rallies and meetings where candidates can meet voters. But parties can also maintain a valid local presence in other ways. For instance, legislative or local council candidates standing under the party banner might organize and pay for campaign events themselves (Paget 2020), while elected representatives may establish makeshift party offices in their business or home (Bob-Milliar 2019). Party officials at national or regional headquarters might also hire independent brokers to act as local party representatives on the ground. Finally, a party might establish local presence simply through an extensive network of independent brokers or volunteers who arrange informal meetings or mount posters throughout the community (Levitsky 2001; Bob-Milliar 2019). While these other methods might not fit the idealized image of local party organization, much of which was drawn from mass parties in western democracies, we argue that the functional consequences are the same. That is, as long as citizens are aware that they have a local representative of the party to whom they can take their problems, or that party-branded campaign events occur, the relevant party function is fulfilled, and the party—for all intents and purposes—has a local presence.¹

The Party Presence Index

¹ Indeed, recent research suggests that informal party representatives are increasingly common around the world (Levitsky 2001), and overlooking them would therefore miss many of the crucial ways in which parties are actually present to, and engage with, citizens at the local level.

In order to measure party presence, we use survey respondents' reports of engagement with political parties, or their representatives, both during and between election campaigns. Of course, citizen engagement with political parties at the local level also depends, to at least some extent, on their micro-motivations and cognitive and material capacities, as well as the broader organizational capacity of parties. But without party presence, such engagement would be impossible. In other words, we assume that "where there is smoke, there is fire." That is, where we observe relatively high levels of contact between individuals and parties, we assume there must be at least some local party presence. And where we see low levels of party-citizen engagement, we infer that – regardless of how well-organized party headquarters may appear to be in the capital city – parties lack presence at the local level. While self-reported engagement is not a perfect measure of party presence, we argue that it provides a sufficient approximation, significantly improving existing data options, and allowing us – for the first time – to compare grassroots party presence across the continent in a systematic and rigorous way. Our data come from Round 6 of the Afrobarometer (2020), though as we will show shortly, a significant advantage of our new measure is that we can also construct it from other reliable survey data where surveys ask similar questions. Afrobarometer conducted Round 6 surveys in 2014 and 2015 in 36 countries, although we remove Eswatini (then known as Swaziland) from our dataset because one of the key questions around citizen-party engagement (Q24D) was not asked.

Our index combines four separate survey questions that measure various moments and types of party-citizen engagement, both during and between elections. We do this for several reasons. First, because people specialize in differing modes of participation (Verba, Nie and Kim 1971; Dalton 1996), political parties are likely to engage or mobilize different types and amounts of people through different activities. Second, political parties often engage in multiple and different forms of activity simultaneously. Albert (2007), for example, shows that parties in Nigeria engaged in rallies, held meetings, and expanded the number of people working for the party during the 2007 elections, while Gilman (2001), and Masilo and Seabo (2015) find similar multi-strategy approaches in Malawi and Botswana respectively. While some parties use multiple approaches simultaneously, others may choose (or be forced) to rely primarily on just one or two. In the case of Tanzania, for example, a 2016 ban on public meetings forced political parties who had previously relied heavily on rallies as a campaign strategy to look to other alternatives (Paget, 2017), while Brierley and Kramon (2020) show in the case of Ghana that governing and opposition parties may strategically choose to use different forms of campaign activity in different regions. By combining four

measures of party activity, therefore, we ensure that we capture a wide range of party activity across the continent, and avoid inadvertently biasing our measure in favour of certain types of parties or citizens.

At this point we also note that our use of survey data also allows us to measure party presence at different levels where appropriate questions exist. That is, where survey questions ask about party-citizen engagement generally, the data can be used to create a party system-level index. If the questions are asked with respect to specific parties, however, a party-specific PPI can also be calculated if desired – a feature of the index we will exploit below. Scholars could also create other versions of the index that capture other variations (opposition versus ruling parties, for example, or urban versus rural areas) provided the data includes these distinctions.

Party Presence During Election Campaigns

In order to measure the presence of political parties *during* election campaigns, we use the following questions.

Q.23: *Thinking about the last national election in [YEAR], did you:*

- A. *Attend a campaign rally?*
- B. *Attend a meeting with a candidate or campaign staff?*
- C. *Work for a candidate or party?*

All three of these questions ask about activities whose production requires at least some pre-existing party presence to arrange, but which also create public awareness of party presence.

Campaign rallies, for example, are public events at which individuals speak directly to an audience in order to mobilize them to vote. They are a common activity across Africa, and often function as a key form of citizen-party interaction during elections (Paget 2020). In order to arrange a rally, parties must reserve and organize public spaces, coordinate speakers, advertise the event, and often arrange transportation, entertainment and food for attendees (Paget, 2019). This requires at least some pre-existing community presence, in order to make the necessary plans, know who to target, and how to get them to attend.

Campaign meetings, in contrast, are typically far smaller affairs, where candidates or other party representatives meet with discrete groups of people to listen and respond to their concerns. Once again, however, their production requires some form of local party presence to enable parties or their agents to deploy representatives, arrange venues, and identify appropriate people with which to meet, but also creates public awareness of such presence.

Finally, election campaigns at the grass roots often revolve around a relatively small number of full-time party officials or the personal retinue of a candidate, along with a larger contingent of temporary workers and volunteers (Brierley & Kramon, 2020). While these campaign workers and volunteers act as a form of local party presence directly, the ability of parties to utilize them at all once again suggests that they have at least some sort of local coordinating presence, as well as the ability to identify appropriate individuals to represent the party during the election period.

Party Presence Between Elections

Of course, it could be the case, as is often alleged, that political parties in Africa simply come to town like a travelling circus during elections, unfolding their campaign tent and then leaving as soon as the votes are counted. Thus, it is also important to have a sense of whether parties maintain some form of regular presence between elections. To capture this, we use the following question:

Q.24: During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons about some important problem or to give them your views?

D. A political party official.

Again, our logic is simple: in order for an individual to contact a party official, there needs to be a party representative, and probably an office or some form of structure – and therefore at least some sort of party presence – in the area.²

Descriptive Statistics

Across all 35 countries, just over one-third of all respondents (35 percent) reported that they attended at least one campaign rally during the most recent election campaign, while approximately one-quarter (27 percent) attended a campaign meeting (Table 1). Far fewer respondents (just 15 percent) reported that they had performed some form of work for a candidate or party campaign, which likely reflects the fact that this form of engagement requires a higher level of commitment. Finally, an identical proportion of respondents (15

² Because Afrobarometer policy is to avoid conducting surveys in periods before and after planned elections, we are confident that this question measures inter-election contact. We are also confident that respondents are not confusing party representatives with state officials, even in dominant party systems, because the three preceding questions ask respondents specifically about contact with a local government councilor (Q.24A), a member of parliament (Q.24B), and an official of a government agency (Q.24C).

percent) said they had contacted a political party official at least once in the previous 12 months.³

The country variation on each of the four items is substantial, with cross-national ranges of 49 (rally), 51 (meeting), 37 (contact officials), and 28 (work for candidate/party) percentage points, suggesting very different levels of party presence across Africa. We can also see suggestions of significantly different patterns of campaigning. For instance, in most countries (29) party rallies engage more people than campaign meetings. However, in some, campaign meetings tend to be attended by larger or equally large proportions of people (for instance, Niger, Sierra Leone, Mali, and São Tomé and Príncipe). Similarly, parties in some countries, like São Tomé and Príncipe, seem to engage significant numbers of citizens in all four forms of activity, while others, like in Cape Verde and Malawi, seem to concentrate on just one or two activities.

Party Presence Index Scores

To calculate the Party Presence Index (PPI), we combine the responses to these four questions to create a composite variable that estimates party presence as the proportion of citizens engaged by a political party in *any one of the four ways* (Figure 1). The results, once again, appear to support our argument that differing party activities engage different groups of citizens. Across the 35 countries, no more than one third of respondents participate in any single activity; yet political parties engage almost one-half of all citizens (46 percent) through a combination of all four.

As suggested by the responses to the constituent items, moreover, there is substantial cross-national variation around that average. The PPI shows that across the 35 countries in our sample, a person is most likely to encounter at least some aspect of local political party presence in São Tomé and Príncipe, where three-in-four respondents (75 percent) report engaging with a political party in some way. Yet the same is true of just one-fifth of respondents in Madagascar (18 percent). Thus, the scale discriminates our sample of countries quite effectively, with a total range of 52 points.

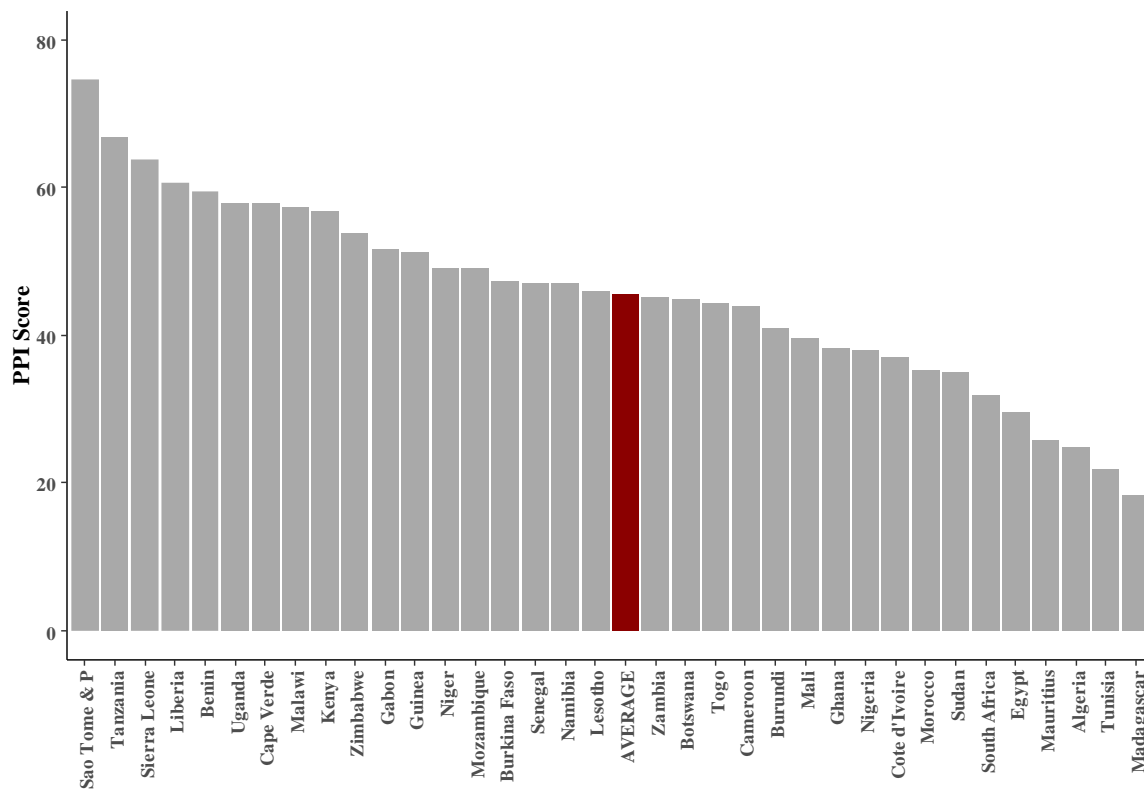
³ It is possible that these four questions capture some over-reporting due to a social desirability bias. However, we are confident that this does not substantively change the overall results. For more information, please see Appendix A.

Table 1: Indicators of Party Presence, 35 Countries (2014-2015)

Country	Attend campaign rally	Attend campaign meeting	Work for candidate	Contact Party Official
Algeria	20%	13%	11%	9%
Benin	48%	47%	28%	17%
Botswana	32%	27%	14%	16%
Burkina Faso	39%	32%	15%	11%
Burundi	34%	28%	18%	10%
Cameroon	33%	27%	16%	18%
Cape Verde	52%	23%	10%	12%
Cote d'Ivoire	28%	25%	17%	13%
Egypt	20%	11%	6%	15%
Gabon	42%	38%	17%	13%
Ghana	31%	21%	14%	14%
Guinea	40%	38%	31%	11%
Kenya	50%	26%	10%	8%
Lesotho	41%	17%	12%	11%
Liberia	41%	40%	28%	40%
Madagascar	11%	11%	7%	3%
Malawi	50%	22%	15%	18%
Mali	24%	27%	24%	14%
Mauritius	17%	21%	5%	9%
Morocco	21%	20%	14%	20%
Mozambique	38%	21%	14%	17%
Namibia	40%	23%	7%	21%
Niger	30%	44%	19%	10%
Nigeria	23%	19%	17%	22%
São Tomé & P	59%	61%	30%	29%
Senegal	37%	36%	24%	20%
Sierra Leone	44%	49%	21%	18%
South Africa	24%	18%	7%	13%
Sudan	24%	22%	13%	17%
Tanzania	60%	48%	12%	24%
Togo	36%	29%	19%	7%
Tunisia	17%	12%	3%	5%
Uganda	52%	29%	21%	17%
Zambia	39%	24%	13%	11%
Zimbabwe	49%	24%	7%	15%
Average	35%	27%	15%	15%

Question Wording: "Thinking about the last national election in [YEAR], did you: A) attend a campaign rally?; B) attend a meeting with a candidate or campaign staff?; C) work for a candidate or party?"
"During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons about some important problem or to give them your views": A political party official?"

Figure 1: Party Presence Index, 35 Countries (2014-2015)



The country scores also immediately generate a number of apparently unexpected findings. First, they suggest that political parties in Africa have a far more extensive presence than typically assumed. Second, the index generates surprising variation in the levels of party presence between apparently similar countries. For instance, while São Tomé and Príncipe and Mauritius are both longstanding liberal democracies with compact geographies, two factors which might be expected to facilitate local party presence, these countries lie at almost opposite ends of the cross-national distribution. And finally, while most scholars see former liberation movements as uniformly well-organized at the local level, our index suggests that at least one – South Africa’s ANC – has a far smaller local presence than might be expected, raising questions about the mediating role of post-liberation incentives to maintain extensive grass roots networks.⁴

⁴ South Africa’s low score might be, for example, a consequences of the country’s electoral system (large-list proportional representation), which tends to emphasize a small number of national candidates, reducing the incentive to run discrete campaigns across the breadth of the country.

Index Validity and Reliability

Given these unexpected findings, we anticipate and respond to a number of potential criticisms related to the validity and reliability of the index. First, do the individual responses to the survey questions tap a common, underlying macro-level dimension of local party presence? Second, do they do so in a stable fashion? Third, does the latent dimension really reflect cross-national, macro level differences in organizational presence (as we assert), or does it simply mirror national variation in individual, micro-level willingness to get involved? And finally, how does our index compare to other measures that seek to estimate similar concepts?

A Common, Stable Dimension: Construct Validity, Reliability and Robustness?

Does the Party Presence Index tap a single, valid and reliable dimension? Factor and reliability analysis of the data finds that it does. First, the responses to the four constituent Round 6 Afrobarometer question items are all positively correlated with one another at the country level, confirming that the items are empirically related (Table 2). Second, factor analysis extracts a single valid and reliable latent dimension from these responses, suggesting that the items reflect the influence of a single, latent variable (Table 3).

Table 2: Correlations of PPI question items (Round 6)

	Attend Campaign Rally	Attend Campaign Meeting	Work for Campaign
Attend Campaign Rally			
Attend Campaign Meeting	.653***		
Work for Campaign	.740***	.394***	
Contact Party Official	.476**	.396**	.455**

Afrobarometer Round 6, N=35

Table 3: Validity and Reliability Scores (Round 6)

	Percent	Factor Loading
Attend Campaign Rally	35%	.999
Attend Campaign Meeting	27%	.653
Work for Campaign	15%	.741
Contact Party Official	15%	.476
Eigenvalue		2.58
Variance Explained		64.4%
Alpha		.792
N		35

Afrobarometer Round 6

Index Stability

While we would expect the index to be able to detect real changes in the strengthening or weakening of individual parties or party systems and change accordingly, we would not anticipate wild fluctuations in either country estimates or the rank orders of country estimates over time. Using a truncated 3-item version of the index for the 30 countries included in Rounds 5 (2011/2013), 6 (2014/2015), and 7 (2016/2018),⁵ (one of the four questions – the item on campaign meetings – was asked only in Round 6), we test the stability of the index and find important over-time differences (defined here as a difference of 10 percentage points or greater) in the reported *level* of party organization in around one-quarter of all countries.⁶ At the same time, however, the rank-order of reported levels of party presence remains very consistent, and the between-round correlations are high, confirming the relative stability of the index over time.⁷ We return to the issue of over-time change in a subsequent section.

Finally, because the index consists of three campaign related items, but just one non-campaign related item, it is possible that this biases results towards countries with parties that are more effective in campaign mode. To check this, we ran a series of robustness checks by combining the two types of variables in different ways. We reduced the campaign related variables to a 2:1 ratio. We also treated the non-campaign related item as equally important to the three campaign related items (1:1). Despite the different aggregation rules, the country rank order remained very consistent for all versions across a 35-country sample (for more details on the aggregation rules, as well as a comparison of the mean values of each index, as well as the Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients, see Appendix B).

⁵ The 30 countries that were included in all three rounds are Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. While Afrobarometer conducted surveys in Eswatini in all rounds, we drop it from our analysis because not all questionnaire items were available.

⁶ Between R5 and R6 the difference is more than 10 percentage points for Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Between R6 and R7 the difference is above 10 percentage points for Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, and South Africa.

⁷ The Pearson correlation coefficient (2-tailed) for Round 5 and 6, $r=.904$, $p<.001$; Rounds 6 and 7, $r=.830$, $p<.001$; and for Rounds 5 and 7, $r=.876$, $p<.001$. Kendall's tau-b coefficient for Rounds 5 and 6, $r=.729$, $p<.001$; Rounds 6 and 7, $r=.628$, $p<.001$; and for Rounds 5 and 7, $r=.715$, $p<.001$, $N=30$ for all dyads. Some of the differences can be explained by the fact that the election related items refer to different elections. Thus, rather than representing measurement error, such country differences across rounds are likely to pick up real change.

Party Presence or Individual Willingness to Engage? Predictive/Criterion Validity

While these results provide confidence that the PPI taps a common underlying dimension, some critics might still question whether this underlying dimension simply reflects cross-national differences in individual motivations or ability to engage with political parties, rather than the differences in grassroots presence we claim. In order to explore this possibility, and demonstrate that our index reflects party presence on the ground, we conduct three separate tests.

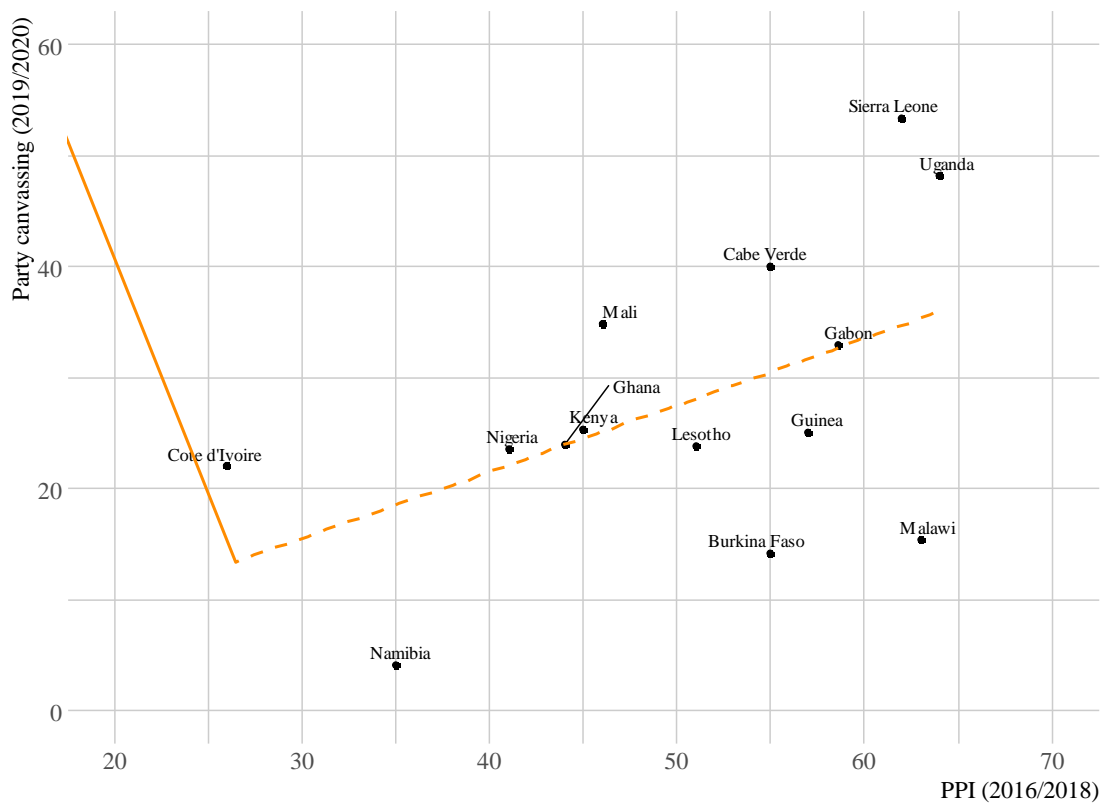
1. The PPI and Party Canvassing

We first turn to new data on party canvassing, an activity clearly initiated by political parties, rather than by individual citizens. Questions on canvassing were included for the first time in Afrobarometer Round 8 (conducted in 2019/2020), and data is currently available for 14 countries.⁸ If, as we argue, the PPI really measures local party presence and not just individual willingness to engage, our estimates should predict variables, such as this, that are clearly a function of party organizational structure. In line with this argument we find that party presence across all 14 countries, as measured in R7 (2016/2018) is indeed a strong predictor of party canvassing approximately three years later ($r=.508$, $p=0.064$).⁹

⁸ Q15C: “Thinking about the last national election in [20xx], did any representative of a political party contact you during the campaign?”. We coded respondents who said that they were contacted by a party as 1, and 0 otherwise.

⁹ We used the Round 7 PPI here to further guard against potential criticism of individual-level motivations and attributes being the drivers of this correlation. Data collection has also been completed for an additional country (Botswana), however, fieldwork in Botswana was conducted during the campaign for the 2019 election, which is unusual for Afrobarometer surveys. Moreover, the question wording referred to the preceding 2014 election, which we feel might have attracted responses referring to both election periods. As a result, we excluded it from this analysis.

Figure 2: PPI (2016-2018) and Party Canvassing (2019-2020)



Note: This is the truncated three-item version of the PPI using Round 7 data, and the canvassing data from R8. The Pearson Correlation coefficient $r=.508$, $p=0.064$.

2. Regional variation in PPI and party branches in South Africa

For our second test, we exploit local level data on party branches in South Africa to show the strong sub-national correlation between this measure and PPI recalculated at the provincial level. The South African case is a particularly useful one for our purposes, because reasonably accurate data on the number of branches per province is available for the ruling African National Congress Party (ANC), a relative rarity in Africa. This data is drawn from the ANC's 54th National Conference Report, which lists the number of branch delegates that were entitled to attend the party's 2017 national conference from each province.¹⁰ Because the number of branch delegates roughly reflects the number of local branches¹¹, we are able to develop a reasonably accurate measure of local party presence in each of the country's nine provinces (number of delegates per 10,000 residents of a given province).

¹⁰ For more detail, see African National Congress (2017).

¹¹ According to ANC regulations: "The number of delegates per branch shall be in proportion to its paid up membership, provided that each branch in good standing shall be entitled to at least one delegate."

To construct the PPI for comparison with this branch data, we take advantage of the 2019 South African National Election Study (SANES).¹² The SANES survey contains two of the PPI items on attending meetings/rallies and working for party election campaigns. More importantly for our immediate purpose, SANES explicitly asked respondents whether they had attended an ANC party meeting or rally during the 2019 campaign.¹³ Unfortunately, the same level of specificity was not included in the question on working for a political party,¹⁴ (Q59: “Did you work for any party or candidate during the election campaign?”), so for this question we counted only respondents who said they identified with the ANC, as we feel reasonably confident that this category of respondents are most likely to be talking about the dominant ANC when reporting partisan election work.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the correlation between the ANC specific Party Presence Index and the number of branches per province is strong, and in the expected direction: provinces with a higher ANC delegate-to-province population ratio (and thus, a denser grassroots network), also have higher scores on the ANC-specific PPI ($r=.821$, $p=.007$, $N=9$). The Western Cape, the only province in which the ANC is not the majority party, scores lowest on both indices, while the Northern Cape and Free State, traditional ANC strongholds, score high on both.¹⁵ Once again, therefore, we find that the PPI does measure local party presence, rather than simply individual willingness to engage. In addition, this test also showcases three important benefits of our new measure – the relative ease with which the index can be calculated at sub-national levels (in this case, provinces), for specific parties (the ruling African National Congress), and using data from other survey projects.

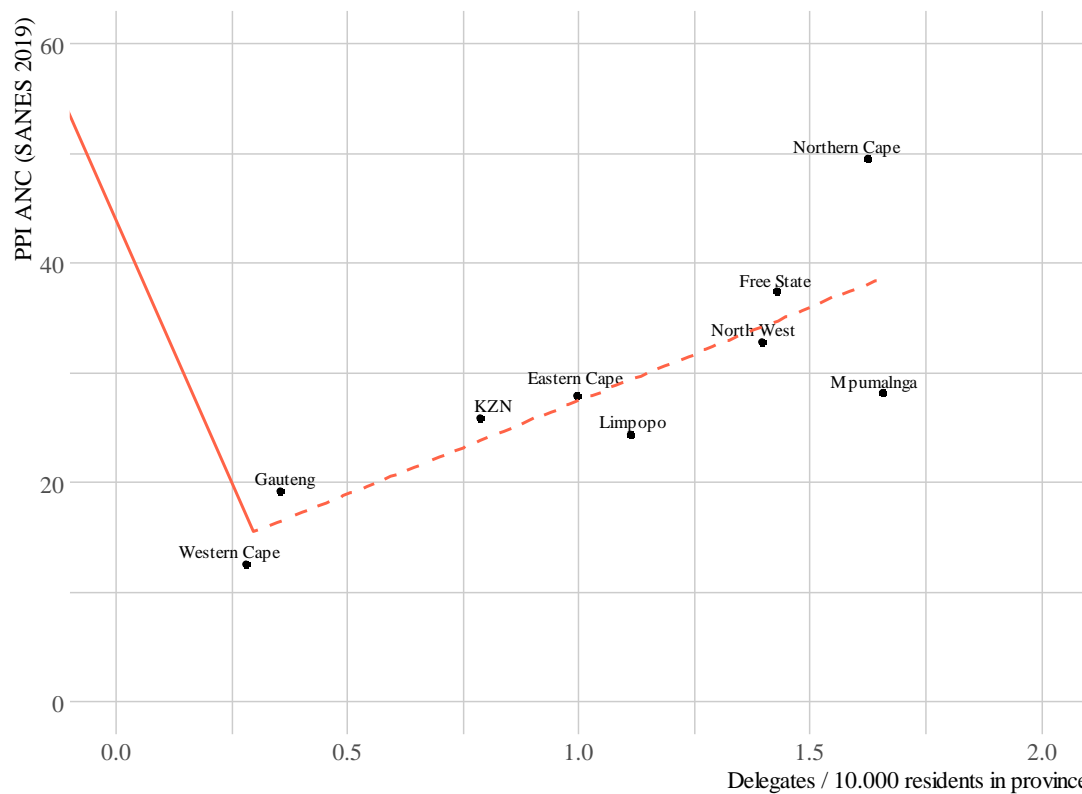
¹² <https://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/dataportal/index.php/catalog/SANES>.

¹³ Q58: “Did you attend any party meetings or rallies during the 2019 election campaign? If Yes which ones? [African National Congress]”

¹⁴ Q59: “Did you work for any party or candidate during the election campaign.”

¹⁵ The same general relationship can also be observed between the PPI calculated from the SANES January 2015 post-election survey and the 2017 branch density measure (delegates / 10,000 residents in province) ($r=.645$, $p=.061$). In addition, when comparing the results between the Afrobarometer R6 and the SANES 2015 survey (both conducted fieldwork in 2015) the two measures, aggregated to the level of province, are also strongly correlated ($r=.807$, $p=.009$; $N=9$), suggesting that the shift in the dataset is not driving the results.

Figure 3: ANC Branch Delegates (2017) and SANES Measures of ANC PPP (2019), by Province



Sources: South African National Election Study, 2019, Stats SA (2019) and African National Congress (2017). The Pearson Correlation coefficient is $r=.821$, $p=.007$.

3. The PPI and Party Change in Zambia

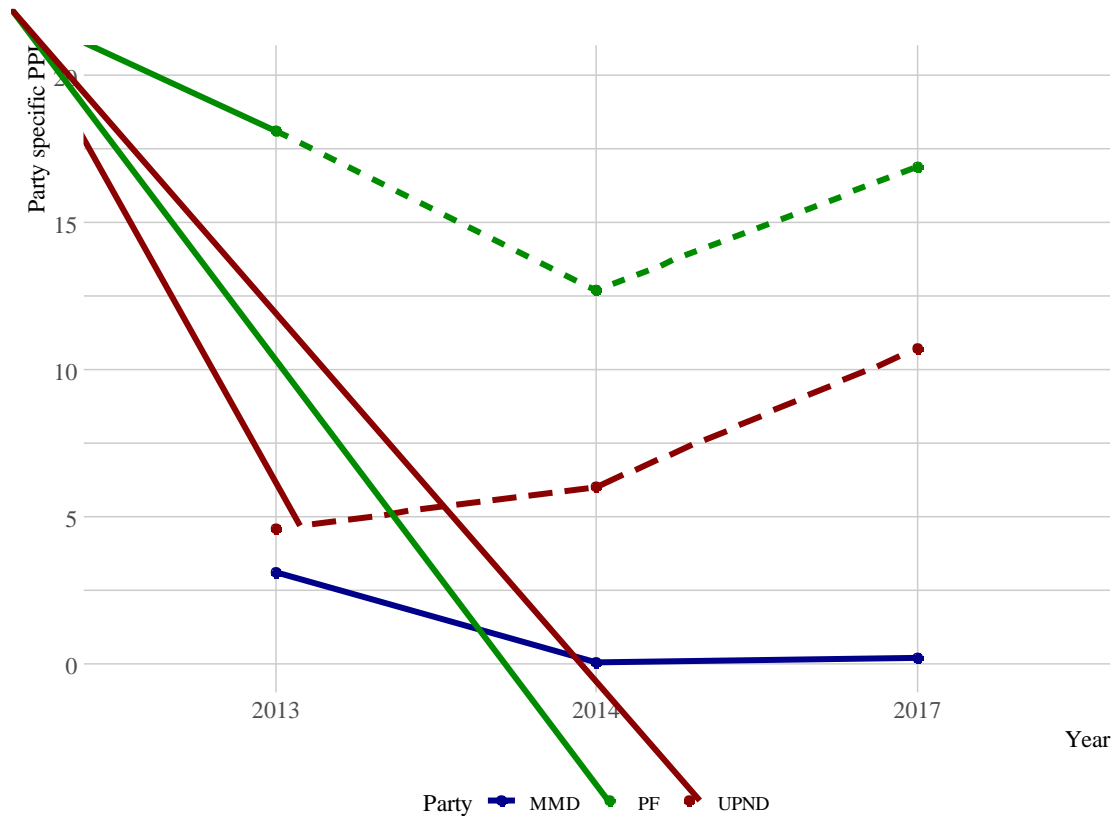
For our third and final test, we construct party-specific and subnational versions of the PPI in Zambia, and use these to show that our index accurately captures known changes in party presence over time in this context. In contrast to the SANES data we have just discussed, the Afrobarometer survey questions we have used to construct the PPI do not refer to a particular political party. However, Afrobarometer does ask respondents whether they identify (“feel close”) with any party, and if so, which one.

Assuming that people are most likely to engage with the party with which they identify, we use this question to construct a party-specific version of the PPI for Zambia’s ruling Patriotic Front (PF), and the two major opposition parties between 2013 and 2017 – the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), and the United Party for National Development (UPND) (Figure 4).¹⁶ As can be seen, trends in party presence reflect the widely documented collapse of the MMD after 2011, as well as the maintenance of party

¹⁶ At the time of writing, Round 8 was not yet available for Zambia, thus we are only able to show data for Round 5 (2011) to Round 7 (2017).

presence by the ruling PF and a sharp rise for the opposition UPND over the same period (see Beardsworth 2020; Siachiwena 2020).

Figure 4: Zambia Party Specific PPI 2013 - 2017



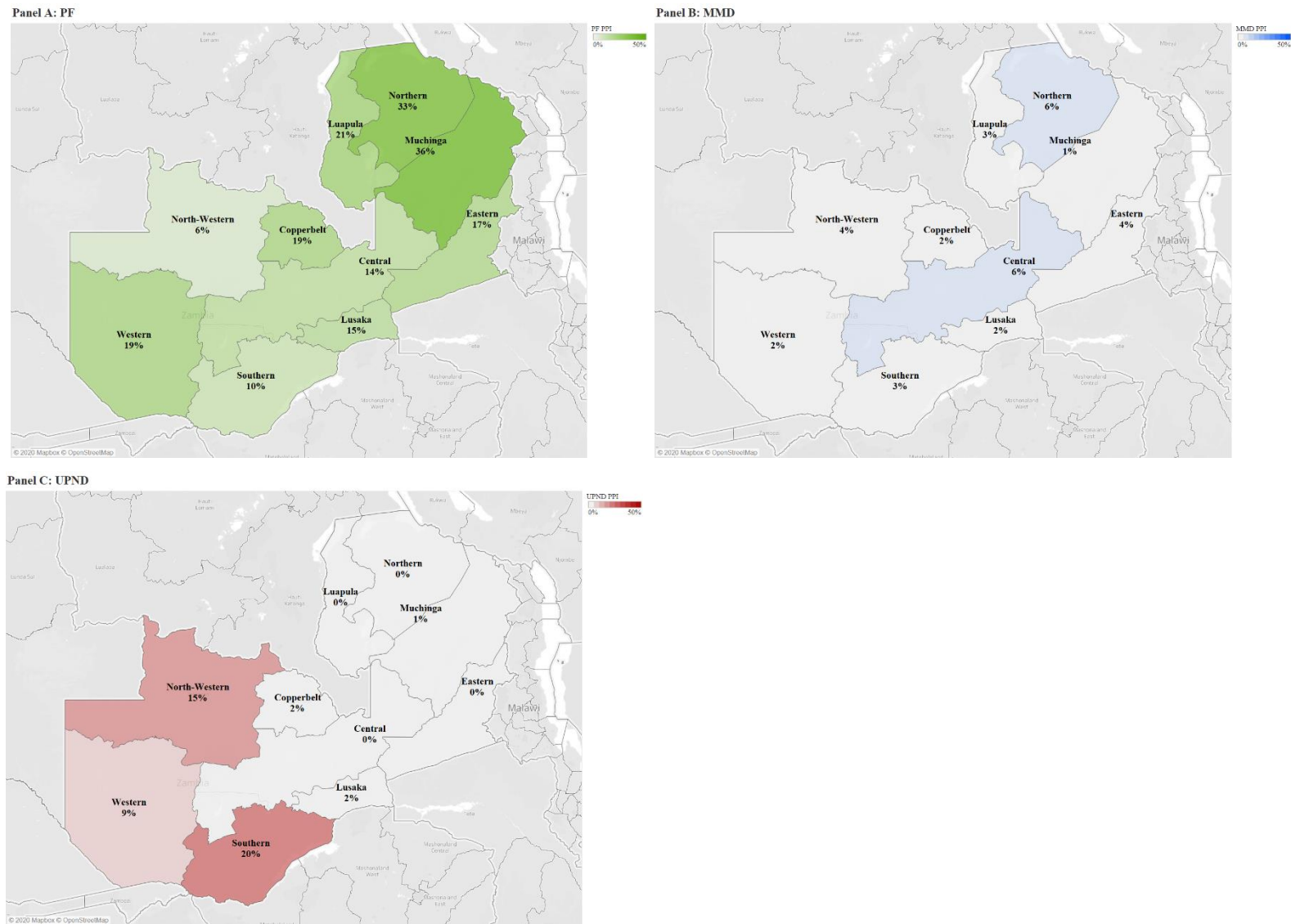
We also move to the subnational level to demonstrate that the index correctly identifies the regional strongholds of each party (Figure 5),¹⁷ again giving us confidence that PPI captures party presence on the ground, rather than citizen willingness to engage.¹⁸

¹⁷ For more information on party strongholds in Zambia see Beardsworth 2020 and Siachiwena 2020.

¹⁸ A brief methodological caveat: the Afrobarometer sample is a stratified, multi-stage, area probability cluster sample. Primary sampling units (PSU) are stratified by the main sub-national unit of government (e.g. province in Zambia, or region in other countries), and by urban-rural location. PSUs are then selected from within each stratum with probability proportionate to population size (PPPS). This means that the sample is not only representative at the national level (e.g. N=2400, margin of error of +/- 2% at 95 percent confidence level), but also representative at provincial level, although with a slightly higher margin of. It is potentially also possible to measure a party's grassroots presence using the PPI at the constituency level, allowing for an even more fine-grained analysis. However, to get meaningful estimates, this would require additional adjustments such as multi-level models and post-stratification techniques, see Hanretty (2019).

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Figure 5: Zambia Party specific PPI 2013 by party



Convergent Validity

Having demonstrated that PPI provides stable, valid and reliable estimates of local party presence, we conclude this section by examining a final form of validity – convergent validity - by comparing its results with those of a separate project that seeks to measure similar concepts. While we have noted several times the dearth of reliable cross-national data on party presence in Africa, a very recent contribution from the V-Dem project called V-Party does attempt to tap a similar idea. A strong correlation between PPI and the results generated by V-Party would, therefore, provide further confidence in the reliability of our measure.

V-Party, like V-Dem, collects regular estimates of country expert judges. In this case, experts provide estimates of a wide range of characteristics about each party with a vote share of more than 5% in a legislative election between 1970 and 2019 in each respective country. Two variables are conceptually closest to our mass-based survey measure of party presence, measured by expert answers to the following questions. The expert judges record responses to each question on a five-point scale.¹⁹

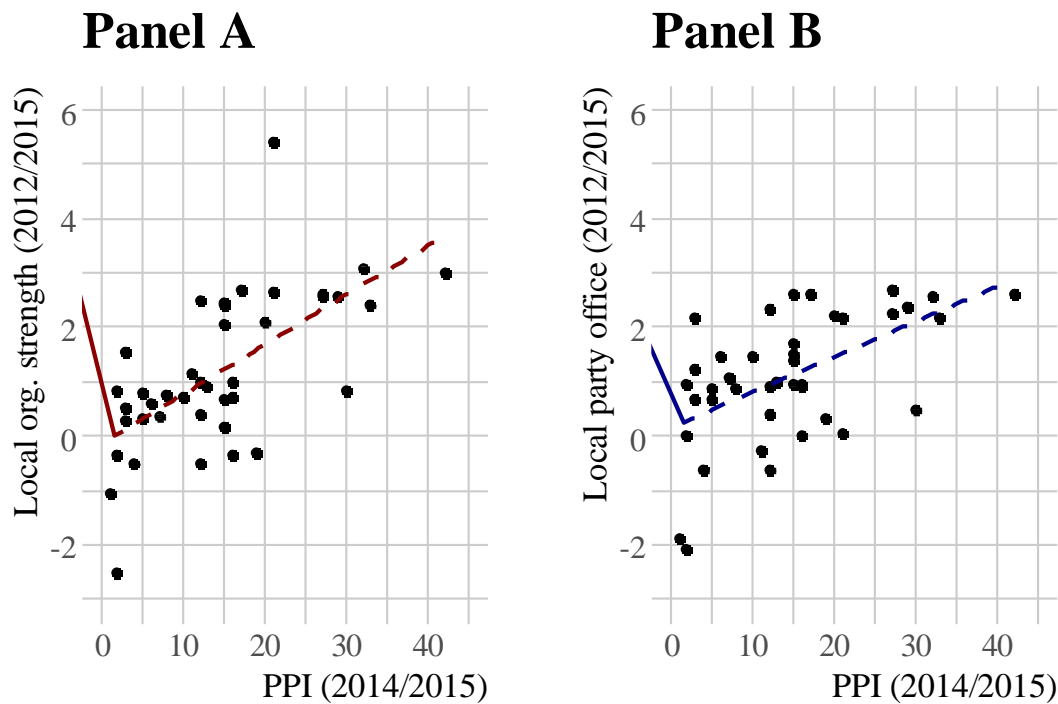
- *Does this party maintain permanent offices that operate outside of election campaigns at the local or municipal-level?*
- *To what degree are party activists and personnel permanently active in local communities?*

We compare the expert responses on these variables with our party-specific PPI estimates for the 40 largest parties across the 20 countries for which both Afrobarometer (2014/2015) and V-Party (2012-2015) have data. This reveals a correlation that is both strong and in the expected direction (Figure 6).²⁰

¹⁹ For permanent offices it ranges from 0: -The party does not have permanent local offices, to 4: The party has permanent local offices in all or almost all municipalities. For party activists it ranges from 0: There is negligible permanent presence of party activists and personnel in local communities, to 4: There is widespread permanent presence of party activists and personnel in local communities.

²⁰ A full list of the parties that are included in this comparison can be found in Appendix C.

Figure 6: Party specific PPI (2014/2015) and V-Party Estimates of Local Party Strength and Local Offices (2012/2015)



However, while the correlation is strong, the scatterplot highlights a number of differences between the two measures. In Panel A, for instance, the V-Party judges award 11 parties similar scores of local activism between ‘2’ and ‘3,’ while citizens report radically different levels of presence for those same parties (ranging from 12 percent to 42 percent). At the same time, the V-Party experts see significant differences amongst 10 parties (which receive scores ranging from +1.5 to -2.5), yet which are all equally absent according to citizens, engaging five percent of respondents or fewer. Similar patterns are evident in Panel B.

One possible reason for these differences is that – in contrast to citizen reports of actual engagement – expert coders are likely to base their judgements on news media reports, or party documents and news reporting, all of which may be heavily shaped by party officials’ attempts to present themselves in the best possible light. Moreover, definitions of official and active membership or branches often differ across parties, and data - if available at all - is likely to over-estimate effective party presence. This not only raises questions about the accuracy of expert judgements who might rely on such data, but also makes it difficult to compare estimates cross-nationally, a problem that is not limited to Africa (Foster 1982, Ponce & Scarrow 2016). Another possible reason is the simple number of citizen observations versus expert judgments: while national level PPI estimates are based on at least

1,200 reports of citizen interaction per country, the current V-Party codes reflect the views of, on average, 4.2 and 4.3 experts for each variable. Moreover, more than half of the parties (21) included in Panel A, do not meet the V-Party recommended minimum of 4 or more party experts for point estimates, while the same is true for 19 parties for the ‘local party office’ variable in Panel B (Lührmann et al. 2020).

All of this illustrates the advantages of constructing an index based on citizens’ experiential reports of interactions with political parties, rather than relying on expert judgments. Additionally, as we have already shown, another significant advantage of our survey-based measure is that it allows scholars to create national, subnational and party-specific measures of presence. By contrast, V-Party currently only provides country level scores limiting the kind of questions one can investigate.

Consequences and Implications for Future Research

Having concluded our discussion of validity and reliability, the obvious question now is, “so what?” The purpose of the PPI is both to measure levels of party presence across Africa, and, perhaps more importantly, to provide a new measure that can be used to test a range of hypotheses about the consequences of political party strength (or weakness) in Africa. To what extent, for example, does organizational strength affect parties’ ability to persuade and mobilize voters, to represent voters, or to enable legislatures or voters to hold executives accountable? While future research should explore all these avenues, we end by illustrating one important consequence of party presence: its ability to shape public attitudes toward democracy.

Popular Attitudes Toward Democracy

If political parties fulfil important functions by aggregating interests and representing citizens, mobilizing voters, and providing effective electoral contestation, might their presence at the local level help produce more positive attitudes toward parties in general, elected representatives, and even the democratic system as a whole?

To examine these possibilities, we devise a multi-level model to test whether respondents who live in areas with high levels of party presence (aggregated to the provincial or regional level)²¹ are indeed more likely to hold positive attitudes toward key aspects of the larger democratic system.

²¹ N=400, after excluding 52 provinces or regions in which less than 30 interviews were conducted.

To ensure we are isolating the effect of party presence, we include controls for a range of national, regional and individual level covariates. At the macro level, we control for GDP per capita PPP, ethnic heterogeneity, democratic history, and type of electoral system. At the meso level, we include the provincial level of lived poverty, as well as the provincial level PPI score. And at the micro level, we build on standard models of trust in government (Mattes and Moreno 2018) and the perceived supply of democracy in Africa (Mattes and Bratton 2007). These include a range of demographic characteristics (age, gender, rural location, employment, and occupation), and factors related to political sophistication (education, cognitive engagement, and news media use) and community participation (active membership in community and religious groups, attending community meetings, and joining with others to address community problems). We also control for the potential confounding effects of co-partisanship (whether respondents identify with the ruling party), neo-patrimonialism (whether they approve of, and trust the President), economic evaluations (an index of past, current, and future economic trends), and perceptions of the freeness and fairness of the most recent election.²² More details on all variables can be found in Appendix D.

As Table 4 shows, we find that even after controlling for this large range of national and individual level characteristics, provincial levels of PPI have consistent and strong impacts on citizen attitudes. Africans living in regions with higher levels of local party organizational presence are substantially more likely to say that elected local councillors and Members of Parliament are “interested” in their opinions ($b=.355, p\geq .01$) (Table 1, Model A). They are also more likely to trust both governing ($b=.529, p\geq .001$) (Model B) and opposition parties ($b=.368^{***}, p\geq .01$) (Model C). And finally, they are more likely to feel that they are being supplied with democracy (a construct of respondent’s evaluations of the level of democracy, and their satisfaction with the way democracy works) ($b=.425, p\geq .001$) (Model D). These findings, of course, require more interrogation and extension, but even this brief analysis demonstrates the value of the PPI, and the ways in which this new cross-national measure of party presence opens up important new lines of research.

²² In the model of trust in opposition parties (Model D), trust in the governing party is replaced with a measure of trust in opposition parties.

Table 4: PPI and Citizen Attitudes, 35 Countries (2014/2015)

	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model D
Dependent Variable	Perceived Responsiveness Of LCs & MPs	Trusts Governing Party	Trusts Opposition Parties	Perceived Supply of Democracy
Intercept	0.721*** (.068)	-0.211** (.075)	1.868*** (.428)	0.441*** (.083)
<i>National Level</i>				
National Wealth (logged)	n.s.	n.s.	-0.091† (.052)	n.s.
Ethno-Linguistic Heterogeneity	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Years Democracy (total)	0.009*** (.003)	0.007* (.003)	0.008† (.004)	0.010* (.004)
SMD Electoral System	n.s.	0.156* (.073)	n.s.	0.236* (.100)
Large List Electoral System	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
<i>Provincial / Regional Level</i>				
Provincial Party Presence	0.355** (.119)	0.529*** (.104)	0.368** (.137)	0.425*** (.100)
Provincial Lived Poverty	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
<i>Individual Level</i>				
Age (Years)	0.001*** (.000)	0.001* (.000)	0.002*** (.000)	n.s.
Rural	0.061*** (.013)	0.058*** (.014)	n.s.	0.045*** (.011)
Female	n.s.	0.043*** (.011)	-0.045*** (.013)	n.s.
Education (Level Completed)	-0.018*** (.003)	-0.028*** (.003)	-0.009* (.004)	-0.012*** (.002)
Employed	n.s.	n.s.	-0.019* (.008)	n.s.
Middle Class Occupation	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Lived Poverty	-.084*** (.007)	-0.021** (.007)	-0.049*** (.008)	-0.079*** (.006)
Cognitive Engagement	0.025*** (.006)	0.020** (.006)	0.040*** (.007)	0.032*** (.005)
News Media Use	0.014* (.006)	-0.030*** (.006)	n.s.	n.s.
Communing	0.031*** (.002)	0.005* (.002)	n.s.	n.s.
Partisan	0.052*** (.011)	--	--	--
Identify W/ Ruling(Opposition) Party	--	0.292*** (.013)	0.409*** (.016)	0.150*** (.011)
Approve/Trust President	--	0.660*** (.005)	0.085*** (.006)	0.201*** (.004)
Evaluations of Natl Econ Conditions	--	0.120*** (.007)	-0.025** (.008)	0.199*** (.006)
Free and Fair Elections	--	--	--	0.154*** (.004)
Level 1 R ²	0.014	0.360	0.017	0.193
Level 2 R ²	0.130	0.779	-0.003	0.590
Level 3 R ²	0.477	0.819	0.405	0.546
Countries	32	33	34	35
Provinces/Regions	349	350	365	378
Respondents	43987	46183	47381	47598

Notes:

Cells report unstandardized regression coefficients and standard deviation (in brackets).
n.s = not significant, and dropped from final model; *** p <=0.001 level; ** p <=0.01 level; * p <=0.05;
† p <= .10.

Additional information on the variables included in the models can be found in Appendix 3.

Due to missing data on one or more variables: Egypt, Malawi and Mozambique are missing from Model B; Burkina Faso, and Egypt are missing from Model C; and Burkina Faso is missing from Model D.

Conclusion

While the social scientific study of African politics contains many standard assertions about political parties, few are based on systematically collected data about more than a handful of parties or countries at any given point. In this paper, we have attempted to remedy this situation by focusing on one crucial aspect of party organization – the local presence that enables political parties to engage with and mobilize voters during and between elections – and developing a new measure that uses readily available survey data to measure the extent of this presence. We have shown that this measure is both valid and reliable, and by demonstrating substantial correlations between the PPI and a variety of other data, we have provided evidence that the measure truly reflects local level party presence, and not simply individual motivation. In other words, we have shown that there is good reason to believe our opening statement that, “where there is smoke there is fire,” and that the Party Presence Index provides a valuable measure of local party presence across the continent. Finally, we have briefly examined one substantive implication of our new measure, using it to explore the role that parties play in the legitimization of democracy more broadly.

This paper makes a number of important contributions to the literature. First, it provides the first systematic, survey-based cross-national measure of local party presence across the continent. While other cross-national measures assessing the organizational strength of African parties do exist (for example, V-Party and DALP), all the measures of which we are aware are focused on the existence of formal party branches at the local level.²³ As a result, they do not capture the realities of local party presence in the same way. Additionally, because these measures rely on expert opinions rather than survey data, they measure the extent to which formal party branches are believed to exist, rather than parties’ effective presence on the ground. The PPI also enables a clearer, more accurate

²³ Similar to V-Party, DALP is an expert survey that covered 17 African countries in its 2008/2009 iteration (Kitschelt, 2013). Although it included three specific questions about parties’ organizational structure and their linkages to citizens, this project suffers from similar shortcomings to those of V-Party. It is an expert survey that assesses party organizational structure as it is believed to exist, and only provides a single score per party and country.

understanding of grassroots party activity and allows the examination of subnational as well as cross-national variation.

Second, this paper shows that a clearer understanding of local party presence can substantially improve our understanding of party behaviour more broadly, opening up new lines of research and casting new light on existing debates.

And finally, we recognize that our reliance on survey data raises the usual concerns around social desirability bias and question availability. But we maintain that the benefits of a survey-based cross-national measure of local party presence in a region where it is otherwise difficult and costly to gather information, means that the PPI will be an important tool for scholars of African political parties, and potentially add to our understanding of grassroots party organization in other regions around the world.

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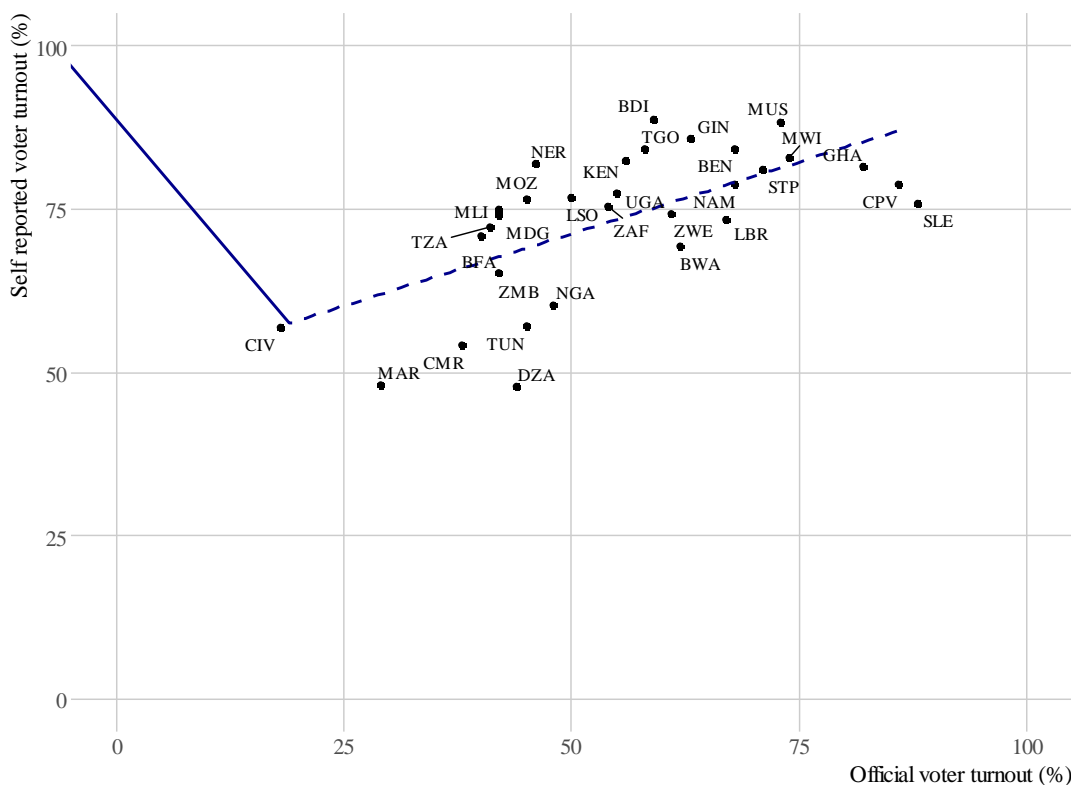
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Appendices

Appendix A: Social Desirability Bias

Survey responses are known to be influenced by various types of social desirability, particularly when people are asked about acts of citizenship, whether it is in response to perceived expectations projected by the interviewer (e.g. see Adida et al, 2016), or the broader community. We assume that the responses about citizen engagement with the political process that we report here are no different. But while social desirability may influence validity (inflating levels of reported engagement), it does not necessarily threaten reliability. For instance, while we know that Afrobarometer reports of having voted in the previous national election are usually much higher than available data on turnout as a proportion of voting age population, both measures are strongly correlated with each other at the country level, whether in terms of the product-moment correlation ($r=.643$, $p<.001$) or rank-order (Tau $b=.489$, $p=.001$). While we do not make use of self-reported voting in this paper, we show that the data which comprise the PPI are strongly correlated with the existence of party branches in South Africa, as well as expert-based judgements about party activity, giving us confidence that potentially inflated levels of reported engagement are not threatening reliability here either. Additionally, while the timing of surveys is likely to impact levels of social desirability, it is Afrobarometer policy to not conduct surveys close to a national election, thus reducing the effect of the social desirability.

Figure A1: Voter turnout and social desirability bias (31 countries)



Note: Official voter turnout data is drawn from International IDEA and matched with the corresponding election which Afrobarometer asked about in the Round 6 survey. When presidential and parliamentary elections were held simultaneously, the election with higher official turnout was selected. Senegal is excluded because Afrobarometer asked about the most recent local, not national election. Dotted line = trend line. Solid line = matching official and self-reported voter turnout.

Appendix B: Robustness checks for the Party Presence Index

The Party Presence Index (PPI) consists of three equally weighted campaign related items and one non-campaign related item (3:1). However, because we include three measures of election-related activity, and one of inter-election activity, it is possible that we have biased our index towards parties that are more effective in campaign mode. To check this we run a series of robustness checks by combining the two categories of variables in different ways. First, we reduced the campaign related variables to a 2:1 ratio. While this still favors parties that perform well during the crucial campaign season, it also increases the importance of local party presence between elections. Second, we treated the non-campaign related item, and thus the time between elections, as equally important to the three campaign related items (1:1). Despite the different aggregation rules, the absolute scores and country rank orders remained very consistent for all versions across a 35-country sample.

Table B1 displays the mean values of each index for each country. Moreover, we display the Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients for the three versions of the index in Tables B2 and B3.

Table B1: PPI (Round 6) with various aggregation rules

	PPI4Item (3:1)	PPI 4Item (2:1)	PPI 4Item (1:1)
Algeria	0.51	0.37	0.23
Benin	1.39	0.98	0.57
Botswana	0.87	0.63	0.40
Burkina Faso	0.96	0.67	0.39
Burundi	0.89	0.63	0.36
Cameroon	0.92	0.67	0.42
Cape Verde	0.97	0.69	0.41
Cote d'Ivoire	0.83	0.60	0.36
Egypt	0.52	0.39	0.27
Gabon	1.10	0.77	0.45
Ghana	0.79	0.57	0.36
Guinea	1.19	0.83	0.47
Kenya	0.94	0.65	0.36
Lesotho	0.82	0.58	0.35
Liberia	1.47	1.11	0.75
Madagascar	0.32	0.23	0.13
Malawi	1.05	0.76	0.47
Mali	0.89	0.64	0.39
Mauritius	0.51	0.37	0.23
Morocco	0.75	0.57	0.38
Mozambique	0.89	0.65	0.41
Namibia	0.91	0.68	0.44
Niger	1.02	0.72	0.41
Nigeria	0.80	0.61	0.41

São Tomé and Príncipe	1.77	1.27	0.78
Senegal	1.17	0.85	0.52
Sierra Leone	1.30	0.93	0.55
South Africa	0.61	0.45	0.29
Sudan	0.76	0.56	0.36
Tanzania	1.44	1.04	0.64
Togo	0.92	0.64	0.36
Tunisia	0.36	0.26	0.15
Uganda	1.19	0.85	0.51
Zambia	0.87	0.62	0.36
Zimbabwe	0.96	0.69	0.42

Table B2: Pearson correlation coefficients for various versions of the PPI (Round 6)

	PPI (3:1)	PPI (2:1)	PPI (1:1)
PPI (3:1)	1		
PPI (2:1)	.997	1	
PPI (1:1)	.969	.985	1

Note: All correlations are statistically significant at $p < .001$

Table B3: Spearman correlation coefficients for various versions of the PPI (Round 6)

	PPI (3:1)	PPI (2:1)	PPI (1:1)
PPI (3:1)	1		
PPI (2:1)	.990	1	
PPI (1:1)	.898	.938	1

Note: All correlations are statistically significant at $p < .001$

Appendix C: Parties included in the PPI and V-Party comparison

For a country/party to be included in the comparison the following conditions had to be met:

- Included in Round 6 (2014/2015) of Afrobarometer,
- Score available in V-Party database between 2012 and 2015. If multiple scores were available, the one closest to the Afrobarometer survey was selected

The following countries included in Afrobarometer did not have corresponding scores between 2012 and 2015 in V-Party: Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Liberia, Morocco, Niger, Uganda, Zambia. By contrast, Benin was excluded because the names for the parties/alliances could not easily be matched.

Table C1: Countries and parties included in PPI-V-Party comparison

Country	Party Name
Algeria	National Liberation Front; Movement of Society for Peace, Islamic Renaissance Movement
Botswana	BCP; BDP
Burkina Faso	Congress for Democracy and Progress
Burundi	Independents of Hope; National Council for the Defense of Democracy - Front for the defense of democracy
Cameroon	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement; Social Democratic Front
Ghana	NDC; NPP
Kenya	ODM; The National Alliance
Lesotho	ABC; DC
Malawi	DPP; MCP
Mozambique	FRELIMO, RENAMO
Namibia	SWAPO; DTA
Nigeria	APC; PDP
São Tomé and Príncipe	Independent Democratic Action; Movement for the Liberation of ST & P / Soc Democratic party
Senegal	Alliance Pour la République; Parti Démocratique Sénégalais
Sierra Leone	All People's Congress; Sierra Leone People's Party
South Africa	ANC; DA
Tanzania	CCM; CHADEMA
Togo	Union for the Republic; Union of Forces for Change
Tunisia	Ennahdha Party/Renaissance Party; Nidaa Tounes
Zimbabwe	ZANU-PF; MDC-T

Appendix D: Variables for the Regression Analysis

	Variable type	Item wording / Description	Source
Party Presence and Organization			
<i>Party Presence Index (AB)</i>			
Attend campaign rally	Item	Thinking about the last national election in [20XX], did you: Attend a campaign rally? (Q23A, R6)	AB R5/6/7
Attend meeting with candidate / campaign staff	Item	Thinking about the last national election in [20XX], did you: Attend a meeting with a candidate or campaign staff? (Q23B)	AB R6
Work for candidate/party	Item	Thinking about the last national election in [20XX], did you: Work for a candidate or party? (Q23D, R6)	AB R5/6/7
Contact party official	Item	During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons about some important problem or to give them your views: A political party official? (Q24D)	AB R5/6/7
Close to party	Item	Do you feel close to any particular political party? (Q90A, R6)	AB R6/8
Which party	Item	Which party is that? (Q90B, R6)	AB R6/8
<i>ANC Party Presence</i>			
Attend campaign rally	Item	Did you attend any party meetings or rallies during the 2019 election campaign? If yes, which ones? A) ANC (Q58)	SANES 2019
Work for candidate/party	Item	Did you work for any party or candidate during the election campaign? (Q59)	SANES 2019
Close to party	Item	Many people feel close to a particular political party over a long period of time, although they may occasionally vote for a different party. What about you? Do you usually think of yourself as close to a particular party? (Q16)	SANES 2019
Which party	Item	Which party is that? (Q18)	SANES 2019
Delegates / 10,000 residents in province	Item	Number of delegates invited to the 54 th ANC conference; province population is drawn from 2017 estimates of Stats SA	ANC & STATS SA

Party Canvassing (AB)

Party canvassing	Item	Thinking about the last national election in [20XX] Did any representative of a political party contact you during the campaign? (Q15C)	AB R8
Canvassed by which party	Item	If someone from a political party contacted you, which party were they from? (Q15D)	AB R8

Consequences of Party Presence

Macro level

National wealth (logged)	Item	GDP/capital (logged) for 2014	World Bank
Ethno-linguistic heterogeneity	Item	Alesina	
Years democracy (total)	Item	Total number of years (as of year of survey) with an average Freedom House score (political rights and civil liberties) score ≤ 2.5	Freedom House
Electoral system (SMD)	Item	Countries that elect legislators from single member districts across the entire territory (can also include top-up seats distributed on basis of proportionality)	Author's Calculation
Electoral system	Item	Countries that elect legislators from large regional or national party lists (Average district magnitude > 7.0)	Author's Calculation

Micro level

Voter turnout	Item	Understanding that some people were unable to vote in the most recent national election in [20XX], which of the following statements is true for you? (Q21)	AB R6
Local Councilor and MP responsive	Index	How much of the time do you think the following try their best to listen to what people like you have to say? A) Members of Parliament; B) Local government councilors (Q59 A+B) Average score of the two items	AB R6
Trust governing party	Item	How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The ruling party? (Q52F)	AB R6
Trust opposition parties	Item	How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The opposition political parties? (Q52G)	AB R6
Perceived supply of democracy	Construct	In your opinion how much of a democracy is [COUNTRY] today (Q40) Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [COUNTRY]? (Q41)	AB R6
Age	Item	How old are you? (Q1)	AB R6
Location	Item	Urban or rural primary sampling unit (URBRUR)	AB R6
Gender	Item	Respondent's gender (Q101)	AB R6
Education	Item	What is your highest level of education? (Q97)	AB R6
Employment	Item	Do you have a job that pays a cash income? If yes, is it full-time or part-time? If no, are you presently looking for a job? (Q95)	AB R6
Middle class occupation	Construct	What is your main occupation (Q96A); Do you work for yourself, for someone else in the private sector or the non-governmental sector or for government? (Q96B) If work for self + shop owner, or supervisor, mid-level professional, or upper-level professional)	AB R6

Lived poverty index	Index	Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: A) gone without enough food to eat? B) gone without enough clean water for home use? C) gone without medical care? D) gone without enough fuel to cook your food? E) gone without a cash income? (Q8A-E) Single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 2.76) explains 55.27% of common variance. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .795.	AB R6
Cognitive engagement	Construct	How interested would you say you are in public affairs? (Q13) When you get together with your friends or family, would you say you discuss political matters? (Q14) The two items are correlated (Pearson's r) at .556. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .714.	AB R6
News media use	Index	How often do you get news from the following sources: A) Radio B) Television C) Newspaper? (Q12A-C) Single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 1.66) explains 55.48% of common variance. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .586.	AB R6
Communing	Index	For each one, could you tell me whether you are an official leader, an active member, an inactive member, or not a member: A) A religious group that meets outside of regular worship services; B) Some other voluntary association or community group? (Q19A-B) Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year. <i>[If Yes, read out options 2-4].</i> If not, would you do this if you had the chance? A) Attended a community meeting; B) Got together with others to raise an issue? (Q20A-B) Single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 2.17) explains 54.28% of common variance. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .715.	AB R6
Approve/trust president	Construct	Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past twelve months, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? President /Prime Minister ____? (Q68A) How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: The President (Q52A) The two items are correlated (Pearson's r) at .624. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) = .766.	AB R6
Evaluation of national economic conditions	Index	In general, how would you describe: The present economic condition of this country? (Q4A) Looking back, how do you rate economic conditions in this country compared to twelve months ago? <i>[Read out options]</i> Looking ahead, do you expect economic conditions in this country to be better or worse in twelve months time? <i>[Read out options]</i> Single unrotated factor (Eigenvalue = 1.80) explains 60.0% of common variance. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .665.	AB R6
Free and fair elections	Item	On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in [20XX]? (Q22)	AB R6